

Sustaining Healthy Ecosystems, Livelihoods, and Local Seafood (SHELLS) Act of 2023
Section-by-section summary

Section 1. Short Title.

Section 2. Office of Aquaculture. Creates a program office for aquaculture within USDA with the following provisions:

(a) Definitions.

- Defines aquaculture using the definition in the National Aquaculture Act of 1980.
- Defines the terms “committee,” “director,” and “office” for purposes of this Act.

(b) Office

- Establishes an Office of Aquaculture within the USDA.
- Directs the office to promote aquaculture operations that promote US food security and limit adverse environmental effects
- Places shellfish, seaweed, and land-based aquaculture systems within the office’s jurisdiction, as well as other forms as determined by the Secretary.
- Gives the office the following responsibilities:
 - Promote aquaculture practices that provide environmental, economic, and social benefits.
 - Support the development of science-based best practices and provide technical assistance for farmers.
 - Update and ensure support for aquaculture in relevant USDA programs.
 - Support aquaculture programs through stakeholder engagement, extension and outreach, collaboration with other federal agencies, collaboration with USDA internal agencies, application of risk mitigation programs, and collection and analysis of production data.
 - Represent the USDA on the NIST’s Subcommittee on Aquaculture.

(c) Aquaculture Advisory Committee

- Establishes an advisory committee to advise the Office on aquaculture policies, acknowledgment of Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge, and implementation of the Office’s responsibilities.
- Includes committee seats for aquaculture producers, Tribal representatives, State or Interstate Commission representatives, scientists, nonprofit organizations, relevant port, coastal or working waterfront communities, supply chain experts, and aquaculture end users such as chefs or grocers.
- Sets terms of one to three years for committee members.
- Directs the committee to meet at least three times annually and develop a report on its recommendations every two years.

(d) Appropriations

- Authorizes \$25 million per year for 2024-2028.